Are Meal Replacement Shakes and Bars for You?

Research shows that replacing 1-2 meals and snacks a day with meal replacement shakes or bars can help with weight loss and control of glucose and cholesterol. These products help by controlling portion size and calories and limiting exposure to tempting foods.

Should you try a meal replacement? Here are some things to consider:

- Are you willing to substitute a shake or nutrition bar for 1-2 meals or snacks a day for as long as you need to lose weight? Remember you are not adding these bars to your meals and snacks. You are completely replacing the meals and snacks.
- Are you willing to eat only one, or at most two, conventional low calorie meal(s) a day?
- Once you lose weight, are you willing to continue the meal replacement for at least one meal and snack a day to maintain that weight loss?

To use a meal replacement wisely, read the nutrition label carefully. First, find the portion size and how many servings are in one container. All the nutrition information is based on that one serving so you must stick to that amount. These products generally have 150-250 calories per serving. Certainly 250 would be OK for a breakfast or lunch, but not for a snack, so you must know what you are choosing.

Keep the saturated fat in the product to 2 grams or less and trans fat to 0 grams per serving to protect your heart. Look for lower sodium products as well to control your blood pressure.

Be sure the carbohydrate does not exceed the limit per meal or snack recommended by your health care provider. Meal replacements made for people with diabetes may raise the blood glucose less after a meal or snack than other meal replacements. Only by checking your blood glucose two hours after the meal or snack will you know if your blood glucose is under the recommended 180. (Some health care providers recommend less than 140 after meals so check to see which number is right for you.)

You may want to add low calorie vegetables either cooked or as a salad to the meal replacement to round out your meal. This can satisfy “crunch” hunger, increasing fiber and adding some flavor variety.

Talk to your dietitian or diabetes educator if you want to try a meal replacement. They can offer guidance and support as you use these products.
Aspirin Intake and Diabetes: What you need to know

According to the American Diabetes Association, people with diabetes have a greater risk for developing cardiovascular disease (CVD) compared to people without diabetes. When a person has CVD, blood clotting substances called platelets fill the artery leading to the heart and cause a clot. This clot blocks the blood flow in the artery and results in a heart attack. Aspirin works to prevent this clotting.

Who needs aspirin therapy?
The American Diabetes Association, the American Heart Association, and the American College of Cardiology Foundation say that aspirin can be used to prevent another heart attack in those who have already had one. However they caution against taking it to prevent a first heart attack if a man is less than age 50 or a woman is less than age 60. In contrast, the U.S. Preventative Services Task Force recommends aspirin therapy to prevent heart attacks in men who are 45-79 years and women who are 55-79 years of age even if they do not have a history of heart disease. Whether adults over age 80 should take aspirin is unclear.

The suggested dose is 75-100 milligrams per day or 100-325 milligrams every other day.

Possible Side Effects
Aspirin can sometimes cause bleeding in the stomach and intestines. Those most at risk are men, people with a history of ulcers, older adults, and people with uncontrolled high blood pressure. A lower dose usually reduces risk for this side effect.

You may also be more likely to bleed if you are currently taking blood thinners like warfarin or pain medicines called NSAIDS such as ibuprofen (Motrin®) and naproxen sodium (Aleve®).

Conclusion
If you think you might like to try aspirin, discuss it with your health care provider. Then together you can decide whether it is right for you.

Social Media and Diabetes: Being Smart, Being Safe

Do you use social media to connect with friends and family? Have you also used it to learn more about your diabetes? You can learn a lot from tweets, blogs, video sharing and online health communities, but just like any other advice, evaluate it carefully.

First, be careful about sharing your own health information. Use privacy settings when available to choose who can see details about your condition or treatment.

If you are reading a message or seeing a video from someone else, consider what his/her background and experience may be. Especially be cautious if a person recommends a change in your treatment or claims a certain regimen or product will “cure” you.

If they offer stories or testimonials about a product or treatment, remember a good story is not
A is for the A1C test.

The A1C Test shows what your blood glucose has been over three months. The goal for many people is below 7. Ask your health care provider what your number should be. High blood glucose harms your heart and blood vessels, kidneys, feet, and eyes. To lower your A1C, eat less carbohydrate, become more active or change your diabetes medicine.

B is for Blood pressure.

Your blood pressure should be below 140/80 unless your doctor sets a different goal. High blood pressure makes your heart work too hard. It can cause heart attack, stroke, and kidney disease. To lower it, you may need to lose weight, eat less salt, consume more vegetables and fruits, exercise more or take blood pressure medicine.

C is for Cholesterol.

Ask what your cholesterol numbers should be. LDL or “bad” cholesterol can clog your blood vessels causing a heart attack or stroke. HDL or “good” cholesterol removes cholesterol from your blood vessels. Weight loss and regular physical activity for at least 30 minutes can help to lower the bad and raise the good cholesterol. Eating foods with less saturated and trans fats also helps. If these changes are not enough, you may need a statin drug.

Back to Basics: The ABCs of Good Diabetes Health

According to the National Diabetes Education Program, everyone with diabetes needs to know their diabetes ABCs. What is the diabetes ABCs? Let’s look at them more closely:

scientific research that proves something works. Also be wary if a site has many ads that may slant its content.

Check whether a health organization like the Centers for Disease Control, the National Institutes of Health, the American Diabetes Association or the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics supports the information. Also see when it was last updated. If you are unsure about anything, ask your health care team about it or better yet, look at it with them.

Next time you have a check-up, ask the medical team to recommend some good social media resources. This will help you to find the best sources without wasting time on the inaccurate ones.

Diabetes Life Lines

Back to Basics: The ABCs of Good Diabetes Health

According to the National Diabetes Education Program, everyone with diabetes needs to know their diabetes ABCs. What is the diabetes ABCs? Let’s look at them more closely:
Recipe Corner

Very Veggie Burger

4 servings

- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 4 tablespoons chopped Vidalia onion
- 4 slices Swiss cheese (containing 6 grams of fat or less per slice)
- ½ cup mashed avocado
- 4 teaspoons low fat mayonnaise
- 4 Veggie Burgers
- 4 Whole Wheat Thin Bagels
- 4 slices tomato
- ½ cup shredded lettuce

1. In a small microwave safe bowl, combine garlic and onion. Microwave on HIGH for 5 seconds. Stir in avocado and mayo until well blended.

2. Bring a large skillet sprayed with nonstick spray to medium heat. Cook veggie burgers for about 4 minutes per side, until cooked through.

3. Place each patty on the bottom half of the thin bagel. Top with one-fourth of the avocado mixture, a cheese slice, a slice of tomato, and 2 tablespoons of lettuce. Finish with a bagel top.

Nutrition Analysis:

- Calories: 248
- Carbohydrate: 30 grams
- Protein: 15 grams
- Total Fat: 10 grams
- Saturated Fat: 4 gram
- Cholesterol: 20 milligrams
- Sodium: 363 milligrams
- Fiber: 7 grams

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Dear Friend,

Diabetes Life Lines is a bi-monthly publication sent to you by your local county Extension agent.

It is written by an Extension Nutrition and Health Specialist and other health professionals from the University of Georgia. This newsletter brings you the latest information on diabetes self-management, healthy recipes and news about important diabetes-related events.

If you would like more information, please contact your local county Extension Office.

Yours truly,

County Extension Agent